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HOW THE YEARS GO!

BY ERIN E. BEXFORD.

How fast the years go!
It was only yesterday morning
That I was a little girl.
I loved the birds and the blossoms,
And my soul was undefiled.
And life seemed a fair, wide meadow,
Stretched far and far away,
Bathed in eternal sunshine;
But what does it seem to-day?

How swift the years go!
That was the merry morning
When no stain was on my soul;
I was a little girl, a night whose shadows
Like clouds about me roll.
And my soul got stained in the struggle
By night, along the way,
And I wandered far, for the meadows
Are out of sight to-day.

How fast the years go!
Only a day and an evening;
A night is a shadowy morn;
From the morn I longed lonely,
A lonelier day was born.
Only a little time treading
A long and a changeful way,
Beginning sun and gladness,
But leading through gloom to-day.

Out in the World: THE FOUNDLING OF RAT ROW.

A ROMANCE OF CINCINNATI.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL,
AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

UNDER THE STORM.

It was an ugly night. It had been raining fiercely all day, and now the roads were ankle-deep in mud, the trees dripping, and Mill Creek—bank full—rolled its yellow flood noisily to the Ohio.

Dark as was the night, however—black as was the sky, and miry as were the roads, there was a woman abroad, under the fury of a terrible equinoctial storm—a storm, the like of which had not been seen for many a day before.

She was a slight, girlish creature, dressed in plain unpretending black, her head covered by a sort of a cloak, which also served the purpose—in a partial way, at least—of a wrapping; and her small feet were covered with cloth gaiters, which, soaking as they were, afforded but a sorry protection.

The darkness was too deep to permit of her face being seen, but when the lightning flashed out, as it did now and then, it revealed the fact that she was drenched to the skin, and that she was only able to stagger forward.

"Oh! if I could reach Cincinnati," she said, clasping her hands and looking up at the inky sky. "Oh, God! in your mercy, have pity and help me!" she added, while the cold rain fell upon her upturned face like human tears. "I can not go much further."

There was a rumble of carriage-wheels, and then a pair of lights gleamed away ahead, along the road, and the girl knew they were on the front of a vehicle.

"I will stop them and ask to be taken to the city," she exclaimed, at once, but the next moment she stepped out of the path and allowed the carriage to rattle by. It was a stylish affair. The horses were steaming and the driver soaking, but from within came peals of laughter and the voices of men.

The woman pushed back the tangled skeins of black hair from her face, and gazed after the rattling vehicle. Finally it disappeared in a curve of the road, and then the girl, shaking her head, said sadly: "No, I dare not speak to such as these; they are not in the mood to sympathize with a poor outcast." She shivered with ague, as she said this, and wrung her hands fiercely as if she would rub a stain of some sort from them.

Then she bent her head before the storm, and trudged onward more rapidly than before.

Her speed soon gave out, however, and then she toiled more slowly through the mud.

The winds sighed; the rain fell with an even patter; and Mill Creek roared its hoarse song in the deep blackness to the right of the roadway.

A half-mile further, and the girl stopped and listened to the all waters.

"What if I end it all here?" she exclaimed, speaking aloud. "That stream would stifle my cries and end my misery," and then, too, there would be no trace left.

She started from the path in the direction of the Creek; and walked a few paces; paused; then turning, she fled in the storm, and cityward, again crying half aloud:

"Oh, no! no! I can't do that; I'm not brave enough for that."

On she sped, as if flying from the demon of the flood who whispered to her of rest and oblivion in a luring way that almost won her over to suicide; but she resisted; love for life was still strong within that youthful breast; and, sinful as she felt herself to be, she dared not face the judgment seat.

"No, I must live on," she muttered; "I must live for penance and—revenge!"

She clenched her fists tightly again, as she said this, and held her breath hard.

The rain fell faster; the darkness grew as black as velvet; her feet were very sore and tired; still she struggled heroically forward, until the lights gleaming from the old Mill Creek House twinkled through the mist and rain, like guiding stars.

"Thank God!" she exclaimed, and then

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When the rays of the lamp fell full upon the heap, he saw at once that it was a woman.

"Michael Rand, don't you know me better than that?" was the reply. "When I visit Miss Alward I never go to either a gambling-house or to—"

"Oh, very well, sir," was the answer, and then Michael Rand clambered up to his seat, and giving the spirited team full rein, the carriage went rattling over the cobble stones, toward the west end, at a rapid rate.

Presently the houses began to grow scarce, and they were out in the suburbs on the direct road to Cummingsville.

"Ah, by my soul! What's that?"

Michael Rand made use of these words as the horses shied to the right, and he detected something black, like the form of a woman, lying almost beneath him.

"What the deuce is the matter with you? Confound you! go on!" came from within the vehicle.

"There's something lying down here, sir, almost under the horses' hoofs, sir."

"Something? Well, of course go on."

"But, sir, it's a woman, I think."

"You do, eh?" Chauncey. Watterton was out on the muddy roadside in an instant. "Where is she?"

"There, sir. Just to your left a bit," and Michael pointed with his whip.

Chauncey made no answer, but, peering through the darkness in the direction indicated, he was not slow in discovering a blackish heap, that did look, even in the gloom, remarkably like a woman.

"Get that lamp out of the carriage, Rand, and hold it here."

The man obeyed with alacrity, and when the rays of the lamp fell full upon the heap, he saw at once that Michael's conjecture had been correct—it was a woman.

"Here, bear a hand, Mike," said Chauncey; and the two men lifted the woman up and placed her in the carriage. Neither of them looked in the mud-stained face; there was no time for comment, for the woman was either dead or close to the confines of eternity—so close, in fact, that no time was to be lost in procuring aid.

"Drive right home, Rand, and I'll run over the fields for Dr. Glosser," said Chauncey, as soon as the girl was placed in the vehicle.

Michael Rand mounted the box quickly, and, cracking the long whip, was off.

He only drove a few hundred yards, and turned into a long, shady avenue, and a minute after, the carriage stood in front of a long, rambling structure, with many windows and innumerable gables, and two battlemented turrets.

In response to Michael's ring, a stiff-starched porter opened the hall-door and cautiously peeped out.

"Who's there?" he asked, in a slow, drawling voice. "Is it you, Michael Rand?"

"Yes; it's me—Michael Rand—and more than me, too."

By this time the coachman had lifted the unconscious tenant of the carriage in his

stout arms, and was making his way toward the stupid porter.

"Why, bless me! that's a woman," exclaimed the porter.

"I should say it was," answered Michael, shoving the porter aside, and stepping into the hall with his burden. "Is there a good fire in the sitting room, Johnson?"

"A very good fire, sir. But, where is Master Chauncey?"

"Gone for the doctor—old Glosser. Is the madam awake, yet?"

"Yes, she is waiting for you two to come home."

By this time the sitting-room had been reached, and Michael Rand placed his burden on an old-fashioned lounge, and bid Johnson turn on the light.

The latter promptly did, as he was requested, flooding the apartment with a soft radiance, and illuminating the face of the unconscious occupant of the lounge.

"Why, Rand, my boy, she's a perfect beauty!" exclaimed the porter, lifting his eyes and hands at once in admiration—"a perfect beauty, sir!"

The old stupid servitor was right. She was beautiful. Her face was rounded, and had a peach-like bloom in it; her lips, daintily tinted, had a tempting, pretty pout in them, and one could see, although her eyes were closed, that they were large, and that they must be dark, too, since the lashes lay like black silk fringe on either cheek. Masses of blackish hair were coiled, like the turban of an Oriental beauty, about her well-shaped head, and out from under her soiled garments peeped a foot, so small and childish in proportions, that it might have belonged to a girl of twelve instead of a well-developed woman of twenty, as it did.

"Johnson, tell the madam at once," said Rand; "the girl is very ill, and women generally know what is good for women."

The porter heard the order, but did not move; he was lost in admiration of the beautiful stranger's face.

"Are you a-going, Johnson?"

"Yes, sir!"

The old servant straightened himself up, and, sighing, turned to go on his errand. But, there was no occasion for his going now—Mrs. Watterson stood in the doorway. She was a handsome woman still, although past fifty; and, as she swept into the room, there was a certain majesty of mien, that told, more eloquently than words could do, of the pride that was in her heart.

"What's the matter here, Rand? and good gracious, what's the meaning of this?" were her first words.

"This poor girl we found at the bend of the road, and Mr. Chauncey bid me bring her home with me," answered the driver.

"Home with you! Chauncey bid you do this, do you say?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And where is he?"

"Gone for old Glosser, ma'am."

"The doctor?"

"Yes, ma'am, the doctor!"

The old lady knit her brows, and laying her hand on Rand's arm, said, solemnly and slowly: "Michael Rand, did you ever see this girl before?"

The coachman looked up, surprised, and blushing crimson, replied: "No, ma'am, never."

"Nor Chauncey does not know her?"

"I think not, ma'am. He wouldn't have ever known she was in the road only for me, ma'am. I seen her from the box."

"I am very glad to hear it," and saying this, Mrs. Watterson bent over the young girl and scanned closely her features. "Poor thing! beautiful and sinful," she said, half aloud; then, turning to the two men who stood silently by, she said: "She is recovering her senses. Johnson, do you go and call the two girls, and let this woman be brought to the spare room, back. She will need attention immediately."

Johnson left the apartment.

"And now, Rand, had better put away the horses. You are not needed here."

Rand looked at Mrs. Watterson; then at the face upon the sofa, and then turned away to the stables, saying as he went: "I thought it was something of that kind, myself."

Scarce had the two men left the room, when the girl opened her eyes, moaned, and closed them again.

Mrs. Watterson took from her pocket a costly lace handkerchief, and, after soaking it in a glass of water, which stood upon the table close by, applied it to the forehead of her strange guest.

The water helped to cool the feverish brow; then the color came back into the rounded cheeks; and again the long, quivering lashes lifted, and the two women looked into each other's eyes.

"Don't you feel better, now?" asked the old lady.

"Yes; I'm better; I can go now. I'm not so weak," was the reply. The girl raised herself up almost to a sitting posture, and attempted to rise upon her feet, but reeled, and fell back once more.

"You are not able to walk, you see," said the elder woman. "Where did you want to go?"

The girl's face blushed crimson as she answered.

"Oh, I don't know! Somewhere in the city, where I can not be found, either by my father or my friends."

"Then you are not a wife?"

"No, madam." The girl hid her face now, and the hot tears stained her cheeks.

"You have done very wrong; have been very sinful, and can not expect the sympathy of the good and pure."

The old lady's voice was cold and hard as she uttered these words, and the hand she had laid upon the stranger's brow she now

wiped very deliberately with her damp handkerchief, as if she would remove the stain she felt was there.

The girl did not reply at once, but, after a moment, said: "You don't know, madam, how keenly I feel the sinfulness of my position; but, you do not—you can not know, how I was tempted by one whom I thought honorable and truthful."

"Young ladies should have better sense than to believe every thing told them. They have warnings enough, surely."

There was no reply to this, and when Mrs. Watterson glanced down to learn the reason of her companion's silence, she saw that she had fainted again. Before she could do aught, the door opened, and Dr. Gossler and Chauncey Watterson entered the room, closely followed by the two servant girls, for whom Johnson had been dispatched.

"Is she living yet?" asked the physician, rubbing his glasses.

"Yes; miserable people like her are not easily killed," answered Mrs. Watterson, significantly.

By this time, Chauncey had reached the side of the sofa.

"My God!" he exclaimed, Elinor Gregg! He started back with a wild, scared face, and his mother, looking sternly up into his face, said:

"My son, what do you know of this woman?"

"I met her in the country once," he stammered, growing red up to the roots of his hair, "and again at Dayton."

"There is nothing between you two? On your honor?"

"Nothing," replied Chauncey; "only I met her there, and am astonished to find her here, and in such condition, too. It really for the moment shocked me!"

He was cool now, and Mrs. Watterson said, in a whisper: "I believe you, my boy, and I'm glad to hear that you are not a partner in her sin."

"She had better be removed to a chamber," said the doctor.

"Can she not be taken to the Infirmary?" put in Chauncey.

"No; it would be almost certain death. As it is, it is only a chance that she will survive the excitement and exposure of this night."

Mrs. Watterson ordered the insensible girl to be taken up-stairs at once, and when the servant had done so, she returned to the sitting-room to await the return of Dr. Gossler.

CHAPTER III.

FACE TO FACE!

THE little French time-piece on the heavy marble mantel was ringing sharply out three o'clock, when the fussy old physician came in, tapping his silver snuff-box in a self-satisfied manner, and looking grave and wise.

"Well?" said Mrs. Watterson, looking up.

"Well, she's all right—getting along amazingly fine. She will have to be kept very quiet, though."

"She is not out of danger yet, then?"

"No; not out of danger, but I think—"

The imperious manner of the questioner caused the old doctor to raise his eyebrows in surprise, and he said, very slowly, in reply, and without lowering his brows: "Live is the word, I think."

"It's a bad thing for her, then. There is no room in the world for creatures like her."

Mrs. Watterson was rich and proud, and Dr. Gossler did not think it necessary for him to reply to the bitter words that fell upon his ear with a pitiless sound, and so he only took a pinch of snuff and nodded at the fire.

"When do you think she will be ready to move?" asked the old woman, after a moment's silence.

"Well, in ten days."

"Not before that?"

"It's too bad; she should have laid down at our door. Surely, she could have made to the Mill Creek House."

"It was very unfortunate," was all the little doctor said.

There was another pause; then the woman looked up and said: "Doctor, you must not let her die here. It would never do, you know; and you must never, under any circumstance, speak of her being here."

"Very well," was the reply.

"As soon as she is able enough to move," continued Mrs. Watterson, "she must be taken to the Infirmary. You know this would create unpleasant scandal, were it to get abroad, among our set."

The doctor nodded.

"Not that I would be cruel or un-Christian-like, but, you see, a person's enemies will talk."

"Doctor, the young lady is worse," interrupted Sarah, the cook, putting her head in at the doorway. "You had better come right away."

The doctor looked at Mrs. Watterson, as if to say, "by your leave, madam" and then hurried to the sick chamber. When he had gone, Mrs. Watterson called the servant to her side.

"Sarah, you must promise never to speak of this girl being in the house. It would be terrible were it to get out, you know."

"Yes, ma'am, it would."

"Then you will please speak to Ellen and Jane, and tell them it is my wish that nothing be said of this."

"I will, ma'am. They'll do what you ask, em, ma'am."

"Let me see that they do and I will not forget them in return."

Within the next half-hour all the servants had been duly cautioned, and Chauncey, who had returned from the stables with Rand, sat planning with his aristocratic mother how the presence of Elinor Gregg could best be kept from the public.

"She can not be moved now. Gossler says it would endanger her life," ventured Mrs. Watterson.

"The dilemma is ugly enough, to be sure; but, as soon as she is able, she must be taken to the infirmary. That's the best and only thing we can do—at least, it is the only thing that strikes me as feasible," returned Chauncey.

"Yes; you are right, my son. But, how did it come that you brought her here in the first place?"

"Why, it's all chargeable on that stupid fellow, Rand; and then, you know, I never dreamt of any thing like that being the matter, or I should have driven into town with her."

"I wish you had done so," and Mrs. Watterson bit her thin upper lip with vexation.

tion. "Here we have a pretty condition of things to be expecting Lucy home from school every day."

A shadow flitted across Chauncey Watterson's face at the mention of Lucy's return, and after a momentary pause, he said:

"When do you expect sister Lucy?"

"Well, almost at any hour she is likely to come."

"She has fixed upon no day yet?"

"No; but Kate Allen left Pleasant Grove on Tuesday last, and she says Lucy was packing up then to come home."

Chauncey was about to make a remark when he was interrupted by the entrance of Dr. Gossler.

"My dear madam," said the diminutive man of physic, "the affair is over, and mother and child are doing well. It's a girl."

"It matters very little, doctor, to what sex the little unfortunate belongs," answered Mrs. Watterson, coldly; then added:

"I suppose you will come over in the morning again?"

"Oh, yes; I gave her a soothing opiate. She will sleep until morning now."

"Well, a doctor," put in Chauncey, "this has been a larger contract than I expected. But, no matter; you shall be well paid."

"I knew that, sir," replied the little doctor, drawing up his mouth like a closing purse.

"But it's very kind of you folks here to take a poor waif like her in and care for her so tenderly; it's very kind indeed."

"It would not be right to allow a human creature to die in the street," replied the young man.

"Besides, the girl may be of good family, you know. Judging from the society I met her in, at Dayton, I should say she was."

Mrs. Watterson looked quickly up, and darted a furtive, but searching glance at her son.

He was very calm, and evidently unconcerned.

"She does look to be a nice sort of a person," said Dr. Gossler, in reply to Chauncey's words—"a very nice sort of a person."

The doctor took out his snuff, indulged in a pinch, and tapping the box with his red knuckles, repeated—"a nice sort of a person, indeed."

"We will expect you again, in the morning, doctor," said Mrs. Watterson, rising and moving toward the door.

Gossler took the hint, and buttoning his coat up tightly under his puffy, bedimmed chin, struttet out into the darkness and storm.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE MESSES

WHEN the sunlight stole in through the heavy lace drapery, and danced in bright, fantastic patches on the rich carpet which covered the floor of the chamber in which Elinor Gregg lay, it found her flushed and excited.

She scarce could realize where she was, on opening her eyes for the first time; everything seemed so strange and grand to her—so much unlike the plain, roomy farmhouse where she had been born, and which she had left the day before, with the expectation of never seeing either it or its inmates again.

It only needed a glance around the room, and a shy, coy peep at the little form that nestled up closely to her, to make her realize the depths into which she had fallen. Then came the pain, the woe, the heartache—the remorse.

"Oh! why—why did I ever listen to his promises? Why did I put so much faith in that man?" she exclaimed, wringing her hands while the hot tears started into her eyes, and her heart throbbed as if it would break.

"And you," she continued, turning and looking at the infant by her side—"you are destined for—misery, and shame, and disgrace. Oh, my God! have pity on us twain! have pity, and take us home to you! We are not strong enough to live such a life as must be ours!"

She believed him now; he spoke so frankly, and there was a plausibility in what he said. So she told him at once that her confidence in him was unshaken, and that she was willing to be guided wholly by him. So forgiving is a loving woman!

"Then to-night I'll come for you." He stopped down, kissed her, and stole out of the room on tip-toe.

Elinor Gregg listened until his footfalls died away; then she raised up her hands and thanked God for the ray of light she thought she saw glimmering through the gloom.

"She knows you are a mother and not a wife, but she does not know that I am that child's father."

"But, she will know it; the secret can not be long kept, and, unless you redeem the promises made to me, I'll blazon it before the world! I am deep in the mire; lost to society, to home and friends; but, I will not bear the brand alone. You, Chauncey Watterson—you will have to bear your share of the infamy you originated."

The girl was excited; her cheeks were crimson, and her eyes held a baleful, mischievous light.

Chauncey Watterson was excited, too, and alarmed, as well, and his hands twitched nervously, as if he would like to bury them in her white velvet throat.

"You must not speak so loud," he hissed;

"you will have the house about our ears in a moment, if you go on in that way."

"Well, they may as well come now as later."

"No, they may not, Elinor Gregg. You are playing with fire. Take care, or it may burn you!"

The girl looked into his face; it was full of a terrible threat, which, desperate as she was, awed her.

"What do you propose doing?" she asked.

"I propose taking you over to Covington."

"Certainly I'm in earnest. Now, pay attention to me for a moment. You see, I won't do for me to remain here long. They might suspect, and my lady mother has vague ideas that her son has been a little naughty, and it won't do to feed this suspicion."

"But is not Lucy—your sister, Lucy—home from school?" broke in Elinor.

"No; I may come at any moment. You see the awful fix I'm in. Were sister Lucy to come while you are here, knowing the intimacy that existed between us at Xenia, she would let the cat out of the bag, and ruin us both."

"Yes, yes; I don't want to meet Lucy," said Elinor, hiding her face. "Take me away from here as soon as you can."

"Now you talk sense," said Chauncey.

"To-night, when the house is all asleep, I'll have a carriage brought from the city for you and the baby. The doctor says it will not harm you a bit."

"And where will you take us?"

"To my cottage in Covington."

"And the marriage, Chauncey—can not we be married privately, and at once?"

"If you wish it, of course we can."

She looked up searchingly into his face. His eyes were bright and blue, and his face looked frank and honest.

"Oh, Chauncey Watterson, how I've trusted you! You won't deceive me—say you will not?"

"This is worse than idle," he answered, with an impatient gesture. "I never meant to deceive you. My plans have not worked as smoothly as I intended they should, but now things look all right, and in a short time I will be able to redeem my pledges without sacrificing my prospects."

She believed him now; he spoke so frankly, and there was a plausibility in what he said. So she told him at once that her confidence in him was unshaken, and that she was willing to be guided wholly by him. So forgiving is a loving woman!

"Then to-night I'll come for you." He stopped down, kissed her, and stole out of the room on tip-toe.

The entire act over, the Boy Clown is again at his part, jesting and joking, and remarking on the topics of the day, sometimes in rather a caustic manner, but his hits are well made, and the people take them in good part.

With reckless hardihood, Murker had made his way behind the curtain that separated the dressing-room from the arena, and just at the proper moment for his designs, or the first person he met was Jessie herself.

As the young girl caught sight of the lowering countenance of the man she so much dreaded, she started back, with a slight exclamation of alarm.

"So you seem to remember me," said Murker, sneeringly. "Well, it is a good thing that you do. I've come for you,"

"You're come for me?" repeated Jessie, as though she had not heard aright.

"Yes, come for you. Ain't the words plain enough? Go an' get your traps and prepare to leave this place," said the ruffian, coarsely.

"Never!" replied the girl, with flashing eyes.

"Won't you! Well, we'll see about that!"

Several of the performers, attracted by the loud talking, now gathered round, and as more than one of them were with the circus when the accident to Henry had occurred, Murker found himself surrounded by lowering faces, and heard mutterings that boded no good to himself.

"What is this disturbance?" asked one of the men. "And you, sir, how dare you show your face inside the canvas, much less the dressing-room?"

Murker shrunk under the keen gaze and stern tones of the actor, but he braced himself and answered, boldly:

"I've come here to claim my daughter," and he pointed with outstretched arm, to Jessie.

"Your daughter! Impossible!" were heard on every side from the astounded crowd.

"It is false!" cried Jessie, drawing back with every appearance of disgust and dislike in her manner. "It is false! He once gave the old woman with whom I lived twenty dollars for her consent to take me away. That failing, he now comes with this infamous story," and the young girl turned away with a visible shudder.

"What have you to say to this, sir?" sternly asked the actor who had been spokesman. "She denies your claim, and we believe her, and the sooner you—"

"But I have the proofs!" eagerly exclaimed Murker. "She is my child, and there is no power to prevent my taking her from this place."

"Then produce your proofs," said the actor, and see that they are proofs, or it may fare the worse for you. We know you, and I think there is not one present but who would be glad of the chance to give you

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friends, never once admitting the possibility of an overruling Providence raising them up for her in the hour of need; and so, trusting to a first impulse, he sought out the large cities, and there began the search in earnest.

There must have been some very powerful reason actuating the man to such unusual labor and expense.

It was morally impossible that Murker had fallen in love with the mere child, and it was not at all likely that any feeling of revenge for what she had subjected him to, would furnish cause sufficient to impel this persistent pursuit.

For months Murker persevered in the seemingly hopeless task, never flagging or giving despondent, but always energetic, hopeful, as though he felt sure of ultimate success.

On several occasions he fancied the right clue had at last been found, and each time he scarcely slept or eat until he had exhausted the thread that he had been following.

The man's tenacity of purpose was truly wonderful, and clearly showed how deeply important he considered the discovery of the young girl.

At last he chanced to stumble, by the merest accident, upon the right trail, and, like a well-trained hound, he took the scent and was off for the far-away place where she was said to have been seen.

One night, while sitting in a low grocery in one of the great eastern cities, a rough-looking man came in, and all other tables being occupied by parties engaged in drinking or card-playing, he took a chair on the opposite side of the one at which Murker was seated, and called loudly for his drink.

For some time the man drank silently, but Murker observed that every time he raised his glass to his lips he would glance furtively at him over the edge.

So often did this occur that Murker, who was irritable and cross, finally said, snapishly.

"I hope you'll know me the next time you see me. You ought to, anyway."

"Beg yer pardning, comrade!" said the man, good-naturedly, "but, yer see, as how I knows that mug o' yours, though, cuss it all, I can't place yer."

"Well, sir, if you do know me, which I doubt, that no reason you should stare a man out of countenance!" exclaimed Murker, while a dark scowl settled upon his face.

"Thar! I know yer now by that grum-my look onto yer han'some phizabogomy. Yer Murker," said the man, in high glee.

"Well, and if I am, what then?" inquired Murker, uneasily.

"Nothin' pertickeler, only it was funny that I should come agin you here. Don't reckolek me, eh?" Well, I know you. Mebby yer don't mind the night as little Henry was hurted by that rope a-breakin' on the trapeze."

"What have I to do with that?" said Murker, gloomily. "Who are you?"

"Dillson, canvas-man with the Copenhagen Circus. I left it 'way down South."

At first, Murker was reserved, not feeling sure of the man Dillson's true sentiments toward him; but, as glass after glass of liquor was drank, they grew more and more intimate.

Dillson had been telling him of events that had transpired since he (Murker) left the company.

"We had rare good luck one night, by George! It was the werry night as you—as the boy hurted himself. We was travelin' to next station, and a awful storm a-blowin', when, all at one't, old Jake's leaders shied at somethin' on the roadside, which somethin' turned out to be as han'some a young gal as ever yer seen. Well, the manager Jess took a likin' to her from the start, and warr't long before she was the favorite of everybody in the troupe. I never see a gal I a'm to ride like that 'un!' She seemed like as if it was natural for her to be a-settin' or standin' on the pad; and though she ain't been with the company quite a year yet, she can jump a banner, bust a balloon or take the big hurdles 'long with the best of 'em."

At the first mention of the girl, Murker was wide awake, and full of eager curiosity to learn more.

"What is her name?" he asked, almost breathlessly.

"Why man, what's the matter? 'Nothin', eh?' Well, yer look like a good deal was the matter. What do yer want to know the gal's name for?" and the man looked keenly at his companion.

"Psaw! Hang it, there's nothing in it! Ain't it natural that an old member of the company should want to know all about what's going on, and who does it?"

"The gal's name is Jessie," growled the canvas-man. "She's a sweet critter, and the vill'in as would do her hurt had better keep clear of the company, that's all."

But Murker had heard all he wanted, and, scarcely waiting to settle his score at the bar, he was away.

That night, he boarded a Southern-bound train, and in five days stood in the town where the circus had performed some weeks before.

Here he satisfied himself of the correctness of his surmises by obtaining a minute description of Jessie, and then pushing forward in the track of the caravan, he finally overtook it at the town where we left him, in the dressing-rooms of the circus, confronted by the youth he had so injured, and whom he was preparing to deal a yet more deadly blow.

CHAPTER VI.

PLANNING AN ESCAPE.

"WELL, Murker!" exclaimed Henry, "what do you want here? Would you like to make another attempt on my life?"

"I don't know what you mean," answered Murker; "I have come to claim my daughter."

"Your daughter! Where is she, I would like to know?"

"Would you, indeed? Then your highness shall be gratified. She stands beside you."

"What! Jessie?"

"Yes, Jessie."

"I can not believe him, Henry," spoke up Jessie; "and yet, he says he has proofs that I am his child."

"If he has proofs, which I am much inclined to doubt, let him produce them," answered Murker.

"You shall see whether I can not make my claim good. If you feel inclined to listen to my story, I will narrate it to you," replied Murker.

"Proceed."

"Fifteen years ago, I fell in love with a lady whose parents were wealthy, and, as I

was poor, they looked upon my suit as an unfavorable one; but, the lady loved me, so that I cared little about gaining their consent. We met clandestinely for over a year, and our love for each other was honest, true and pure. I begged of her parents to bestow their child upon me, but they were deaf to all my entreaties. Finding that it was useless for me to sue further, we eloped and were married. We lived happily for a couple of years, and had a child born to us—Jessie here; but, I took to drink, and, though I am almost ashamed to say it, I treated my wife ill. One night, I came home to find my wife had fled from me, taking the child with her. From that day until last year, I lost all trace of them, but this letter comes from the parents of my late wife; I will read you a few lines of it."

He took from his pocket a large letter, and read a portion of it. It was addressed to the old woman in whose charge Jessie had been left, and told that the child's mother was dead; that before her death, her parents had repented of their harshness, and, wishing to atone for it as they best could, desired to make Jessie their heiress, and that if her father were living he would be received as their son.

It was all a mystery to Henry, and he read it with incredulity.

"This does not go to prove that Jessie is your child," Henry said.

"Just look at the letter, and see the husband's name written out—Archibald Murker—and I believe that to be my name."

"It is, doubtless, all a forgery," replied Henry.

"Forgery or no forgery, I shall take Jessie away with me, and no one has a right to stay me from my purpose. To-morrow, I will bring legal measures, which can not be resisted."

Jessie clung to Henry, in despair.

Murker left the tent, feeling elated with the misery he was causing two honest and hopeful hearts.

The exhibition over, Henry, as was his wont, accompanied Jessie to her hotel.

"Henry, do you believe this man's story?" asked Jessie of her companion.

"No, I do not. He has proved himself equal to committing a murder, and such a man would not hesitate to utter a lie, or forge a letter," answered Henry.

"And yet, I fear him, Henry. Oh! so much. He may be able to prove I am his daughter," sobbed the girl.

"Don't weep, Jessie. Suppose Murker's story is true, would you not be happier to live a life of ease rather than be one who is at the mercy and caprice of a changeable public?"

"No, Henry. I have something to tell you, but you must not breathe it to a single soul. I am going to run away."

"Run away?"

"Yes, to escape from this man. I am going to-night, when all is still and quiet. I never—never can live with him."

"Where would you go?"

"To the woods, the swamps. I have heard of hunted runaway slaves escaping themselves there, and why not I? Any fate is better than to be given into his keeping."

"You would perish in the swamps. You must give over this wild idea, and endeavor to cheer up. Affairs may not turn out so as you anticipate."

"I dare not wait, Henry. I have determined upon leaving this place, and to-night; for I feel that now is my only chance of escape. To-morrow I will be in his hands."

"Then I shall go with you."

"You will?"

"Yes, Jessie, I will. You will need a protector, and though I am young, yet I will try to be as good a friend as I can."

"Oh! so cheerfully. But, I can not take you away from a life that you are fond of. What claim have I upon you, that you should make this great sacrifice?"

"The very best of claims, namely, the time one dear friend always owes to another. Do you think for a moment that I would quietly remain here and know that you were roaming the world without friend or protector?" replied Henry, his fine face all aglow.

And so they made their plans together.

It was decided that the escape should be made at midnight. Every thing was got in readiness.

"Why man, what's the matter? 'Nothin', eh?' Well, yer look like a good deal was the matter. What do yer want to know the gal's name for?" and the man looked keenly at his companion.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE DEPARTURE.

The Boy Clown slept but little that night. He was too intent over his plans, which were not of a very definite nature. He thought Jessie extremely unwise in what she was intending; but he knew the nature

of the girl, and felt assured that, as she had made up her mind to escape, it would take a great amount of arguing to turn her from her purpose.

"It is a great sacrifice I shall undergo," he said, "for I do love this wandering life; and the laughter and applause of the audience are to me very attractive. It is my duty to go with Jessie. I feel it to be a wrong step for both of us; yet I will not let her go alone. What good will come of it? Likely we will starve in the woods. We may wander on until we come to some farm house, where food can be obtained. Right or wrong, I feel that it is my duty to be a protector to Jessie. May God direct us aright, and make good in the end come from where bad is, in the beginning."

The clock struck twelve, and, as the last stroke vibrated on the night, Henry heard a light tap on the door, and a gentle voice exclaim, "Henry, are you all ready?"

The boy answered the summons, and, after arranging the few things they deemed necessary for their flight, took their departure. It was a lonely night. Beauty was to be seen everywhere. The lofty trees, with their beautiful covering of green; the moon, shining in all its brilliancy, made the scene one of enchanting loveliness. Henry and Jessie forgot for a moment their troubles as they stopped to admire it. They seemed to imagine that their trials were almost at an end, when, indeed, they were only just beginning.

A short distance from where Jessie lay sleeping, the main, or largest stem of the vine had taken root, and, as Henry turned to make a glance at the sleeping girl, to make sure that his movements had not disturbed her, a slight, very slight motion, of what he at first thought was the hanging vine, attracted his attention.

It was but a hasty, careless glance, but it rested long enough for him to see that it was something else than the vine that had moved.

Another and longer look through the gloom that still pervaded beneath the heavy foliage, and instantly a low cry of terror burst from the parted lips of the almost paralyzed youth.

Around and around the brown stem he saw the folds of an enormous serpent twined, and heard, as if in answer to his cry, the sharp hiss that tells the reptile's anger has been aroused, while at the same instant, the broad, flat head shot forth, nearly reaching to where the unconscious girl lay, and began a slow, wavering motion from side to side.

The light grew stronger each moment, and little by little the true size of the reptile, with its flashing tongue and glittering eyes, became revealed.

Henry had a brave, strong heart and cool head, but in the face of this approaching danger, not to himself, unfortunately, but to the helpless girl who slept unconscious of peril, he stood completely unnerved. But he soon recovered, and instantly prepared to offer his life if necessary.

"Are you afraid to trust yourself to my care?"

"No, Henry; I know you to be a good and faithful friend. You have no cause to fly, as I have. You are losing nearly every thing by thus espousing my cause."

"Jessie, I once heard a preacher read from the Bible these beautiful words: 'Whither thou goest, there will I go, and where thou dwellest there will I dwell; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.' It is thus I feel for you. I have given you my word, and I will not break it."

"Strange words to come from a clown, were they not, and yet could they be nobler?"

"Jessie, I have been thinking that after the search for us has been given over, we had better beg for work at some farm house, and, in the quiet round of duties, forget all trials and troubles."

"Run away?"

"Yes, to escape from this man. I am going to-night, when all is still and quiet. I never—never can live with him."

"Where would you go?"

"To the woods, the swamps. I have heard of hunted runaway slaves escaping themselves there, and why not I? Any fate is better than to be given into his keeping."

"Will not Murker find us out?"

"No, we can change about, androve from place to place."

The rumbling of wheels caused the runaways to turn, and discover a team coming behind them. The driver, noticing Henry and Jessie, asked them to take a ride. He proved to be a peddler, and, though traveling in a Southern States, had all the peculiarities and inquisitiveness of a Yankee. They accepted the invitation, and a conversation at once commenced.

"Where might you be traveling at this time of night?" asked the wagoner.

"Not far," was the evasive answer.

"Was you to the circus to-night?"

"Of course."

"Wasn't it prime fun? The fellow that acted out the clown was a small young 'un. He'll make his fortin' I'll be bound. Don't you think so?"

"Perhaps," answered Henry. "How did you like the lady rider?"

"Oh, she was pretty enough to be the queen of England. If I wasn't a married man, with a couple of squalling youngsters in the cradle to home, I might take a notion to shine up to her myself. But, I guess that Boy Clown will be after her, one of these days. Her kinder looked at her loving-like when he held the ropes for her to jump over. I seen it, plain as day."

Even under the paint of red and white, Henry's boy-love for the charming Jessie could be read in his face. Ah! this love is a sad tell-tale.

"But," continued the peddler, "I allus like the clown part best. It's in my nature to laugh, and it makes me feel ten times better when I can have a hearty guffaw. My wife is one of the quiet kind, and calls my laughing, howling. By the way, younger, don't you know of some song to cheer us on our way? It'll keep us awake, and I'm near asleep now."

"I'll try to," replied Henry; "but, it will not be a very sensible one."

"Never mind that as long as it's funny."

So Henry rattled off the following j

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Saturday Journal

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Our Arm-Chair.

A Croak.—An old friend insists upon it that this country is going to the dogs—that corruption, political and social, is destroying our virtue, as a people—that the predominance of the foreign population is overriding the native element and American ideas, that Roman Catholicism is now aggressive and threatening, etc., etc. To all of which we say our friend is a croaker; his father was one before him; his grandfather, *ditto*. That is, every generation is the worst; and yet the world and civilization progress. To-day we are far more enlightened than were our fathers, and humanity is not one whit the worse for its culture and brains. This old cry of ruin is neither new nor alarming. All we can do is to fight the good fight of good citizens, whose watchword is "God and the Right," and all will be as it should be!

The Boy Buccaneer.—Three or four correspondents want to know "all about the Boy BUCCANEER." All we can say—is-read about him, when the new serial introduces him. He is a capital hero, and, though a buccaneer, is by no means an outlaw of the sea, nor a terror of the deck. The story is by the ever fresh author of "Cruiser Crusoe," and is in no way undesirable reading, and all lovers of sea and shore romance will welcome it with rare zest. Look out for it!

Phoebe Cary.—The recent death of this lady leaves a void in social and literary circles which none can fill. She was not only a very sweet poet, but a lady of many excellencies of head and heart. Alice and Phoebe Cary are names most affectionately known in American and English homes; and their decease, one following the other so closely, is a source of deep and lasting sorrow. Phoebe was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, on Friday, August 4th, and now sleeps her last sleep beside Alice and the other sister, Elmira—all rare and beautiful natures, whose living made the world all the better.

No.—A correspondent in San Francisco writes to know if the Women's Rights Women really sympathize with the murderers, Mrs. Fair. We can conceive no possible reason for any sympathy for a murderer, and certainly no honorable woman can feel aught but repulsion for the female who slew the husband of another woman because the sinner had resolved to sin no more. If the two Women's Rights Advocates named visited Mrs. Fair, we can see no propriety in assuming that, by so doing, they committed others to their views.

The Story of a Foundling.—Mr. Bartley T. Campbell's fine life and society romance—"Out in the World; or, The Foundling of Rat Row"—will prove very *seasonable*. Its hero and heroine are two street children, one of whom is a veritable "wif," whose strange history, rare beauty of character and person, and her relations to her lovely boy-lover—all are singular elements of attraction. Mr. Campbell wields a very graceful pen, and must become a great favorite with those who are lovers of romance of the Dickens and Miss Mulock school. Utterly unlike Mr. Aiken, Mrs. Crowell, Mr. Morris, or any other of our popular writers, he is yet, like them, distinguishing for that freshness, vigor and *newness* which are the crowning glories of the younger race of writers. The new serial commences in this issue of the SATURDAY JOURNAL.

THE COUNTRY.

The dog-days are upon us; the denizens of the crowded city swelter and suffocate; the very breeze, that should come from the sea laden with cool vapors and refreshing dew, bears the hot breath of the sandy desert.

In vain we throw open our windows, trusting that the midnight air will render our narrow cells—city rooms are little else—endurable, but the hope is vain.

Then to us comes the thought of the country, the green plain, the shady valley, the rocky, wooded defile, through which, even at noontime, the mountain breeze sweeps ever, breathing health, rest, and peace.

Each for himself, none for his brother.

For them the world holds nothing worth the possessing. A crust is their food, a cellar their home, filthy rags their covering, and the streets their school. Ignorant and vicious, they know little or nothing concerning God and the hereafter, and, like Ishmael, their hands are against every man and every man's hand against them. Of all the gifts prized by men they have only one—life—and it a curse to them.

But, one can care for them! It is no one's duty to reach to them a helping hand—for himself!

The favored of fortune can scatter the shining dollars, with which their coffers overflow, broadcast for luxuries and costly possessions, but none of their wealth is spent for the benefit of "nobody's child."

Plate-glass windows, twenty-five thousand dollar carpets, fast horses, palatial mansions, jewels of fabulous value, and bridal trousseaus worth a king's ransom, can be indulged in *ad infinitum*, but the street children may not be cared for.

Each for himself, none for his brother.

From the streets; from the dens of darkness and crime that infest every great city; from every hotel and tenement house; from thousands of country houses, where misfortune, and poverty, and disease dwell with their weight of sorrow, rise the cry for help—the agonized, wailing cry, that is never answered this side of the grave!

Each for himself! The strong jostle the weaker, and trample them in the struggle; the fortunate crowd the unfortunate, unmindful of their wail of despair; the rich pass hastily by the poor, grasping their wealth tightly, and blind to the outstretched hand, pale face, and beseeching eyes with their mute appeal for the aid they might render—each thinking only of self!

Forgotten is the divine law of brotherly love—unheeded the sacred duty of the strong to help the weak. Those who sit in the high places in life look down in lofty scorn on the appealing ones below, saying, in reply to the cry for help, "Climb, as I have done! I asked no aid; no one helped me; I helped myself. Don't beg—it's disgraceful!"

And with a supercilious smile, they dismiss the matter, and go on working for fame and position, spending wealth freely for costly pleasures and royal possessions.

So the beggar sees aid vainly. The virtuous, tempted of evil, and driven by ghastly want, leave the right way and go down to ruin by scores. The suffering suffer on; the poor starve; the unfortunate are driven

received, of success and failure, within the narrow walls of commerce's mart for one to feel the true luxury of do-nothingism.

But, in the country, where hill, plain, and river, the forest tree, the yellow wheat, the sky above our heads, all seem imbued with the true spirit of rest—there alone can one forget life and all its cares.

Profound thinkers have said that a child alone is happy. A child knows nothing of worldly cares, thinks only of to-day and cares not for the morrow, lives for the hour and for that time alone.

In the country alone can a man imagine himself a child once again.

We are all living too fast; all impatiently counting the days that intervene between the present hour and the achievement of some cherished wish, and half the time it is but a mere matter of worldly advancement. We forget that each hour counts against us; each day that we so anxiously wish were gone, brings us a day nearer to that "great bourne from whence no traveler returns."

Let us then enjoy life by the way; forget sometimes that there is such a thing in this world as work; and to forget we must get out of the city.

We'll fly to the country, then, not to the "fashionable resort" where foppish men and silly women turn night into day, and breathe the heated air of the crowded parlor instead of the pure breeze of the mountain, but to the quiet little hamlet,

"half hid by beeches and pine."

Like an eagle's nest perched on the crest of purple Appenine."

We'll float on the silver bosom of the lake as a red-gold haired beauty; search for fabulous water-lilies, and pluck the long fringes of the chestnut as though they were rare and precious flowers. We'll sup the delicious draft, Rest, and then, like a giant refreshed with sleep, return to the busy life to fight again the great battle of life.

CONTRASTS.

MARRIAGE in high life—how, of late, every newspaper teems with accounts of them! Grand affairs they are, whether the sacred union of kindred hearts, or unholy sacrifices on the altar of gold and ambition, they are rendered elegant by all that exquisite taste can suggest, and boundless wealth procure. Splendid trousseaus; showers of jewels of every kind from every land; translucent pearls, and diamonds like drops of imprisoned light; chaste and expensive plate in endless variety and design; and flowers of gorgeous hues and intoxicating fragrance, whose exquisite beauty and delicious odors are as transient as the hour.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars expended in the various details of a single wedding!

Conning it over, one is led into some speculation. Hundreds of thousands of dollars spent in making a marriage a "grand affair"—one that shall be talked of, and amaze the rustics; hundreds of thousands of dollars to purchase trousseaus, flowers, plate, jewels, presents of every sort, and a hundred *et ceteras* that in an hour will have passed away. The house, the garden, the church, all must be a wilderness of bloom; the air must be dreamy with melody; the bold crowded with every delicacy possible to be invented and manufactured. Every appointment is in exquisite taste, and the whole place like fairy-land. Who, in the throng of guests surrounded by all this loveliness, could imagine that the world held aught of pain or sorrow? Little of it they know—fortune's favored few—for wealth has power to avert much sorrow.

But, listen—look! The streets are filled with people. See among them the street children, hundreds of them in sight; multiply the number visible by tens, and you will have a fraction of the number existing in this fair land alone. Ragged, ignorant, coarse, degraded, and vile—what a horrible array of miniature human beings they are!

But, they are human beings; immortal souls look out through the appealing eyes; dwarfed, deformed and crime-stained souls, asking, *ever asking* for help.

Help! Where is help coming from for these unfortunate?

For them the world holds nothing worth the possessing. A crust is their food, a cellar their home, filthy rags their covering, and the streets their school. Ignorant and vicious, they know little or nothing concerning God and the hereafter, and, like Ishmael, their hands are against every man and every man's hand against them.

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to desperation and hurl themselves into eternity.

"Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurried—
Any where, any where
Out of the world!"

LETIE ARTLEY IRONS.

Foolscap Papers.

Benjamin Franklin.

This renowned philosopher was born in the year 1707, of poor but humble parents, some time before he became so well known to fame. Up to the age of one year he showed but very little chances of ever becoming great. His parents contended that he would; his friends feared he wouldn't, but didn't express their doubts before his parents.

Mamma Franklin had a motherly regard for her infant son, soothing his little aches and pains with pease and ginger tea, and when night would come he would sing:

"Mother I am tired and sleepy, too,
So put me in my little bed."

At the age of two it is recorded that he couldn't even parse a Latin sentence, or do a problem in Euclid; but, after that, he grew to be a philosopher before he was even conscious of it himself. The giant mind that slumbered in the boy began to grasp philosophical questions and to demonstrate scientific theories that have ever since placed his name high among the savans of the world.

Look at him at the age of seven demonstrating to a crowd of other boys the beautiful fact that if an egg, the product of a neighboring henry, be punctured rather largely at one end and rather small at the other end, and the larger orifice be placed to the mouth, the effect is exactly the reverse, imparting a speed that can be better expressed by the figures 2:17, and the victim of his philosophy takes down the sidewalk between the legs of the pedestrians, making them hallo "git out," but always too late, and the dog never stops until the tail or the pan is off, and the theory well demonstrated.

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HELPING MAMA.

BY I. A. POOL.

May be sung to the Music, "Watching for Pa."

Two little hands at the break of day,
Spreading the table and working away,
Searching the kitchen and pantry through,
Setting the breakfast for me and you.

Working for Ma,
Working for Ma,
Busy in the kitchen,
Working for Ma.

Dinner is ready at stroke of noon,
Savory odors are filling the room,
When it is over, with spirits gay,
Wash up the dishes and clear away.

Working for Ma,
Working for Ma,
Helping at the house-work,
Helping Mama.

Alice has plenty of work to do,
Over her books and her papers too,
Buy all with a cheerful zeal,
Closing the day with the evening meal.

Working for Ma,
Working for Ma,
Helping at the house-work,
Helping Mama.

Now in the parlor, sang from the storm,
Floy and Papa by the fireside warm,
Lister by Mama, with faces bright,
After the storm, a song at night.

Helping Mama,
Singing for Pa,
Playing with the baby,
Cooing to "Ga."

* Little Floy's first effort at calling Papa resulted in "Ga."

The Cousin's Plot.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

"COUSIN ETHEL you are left without a protector now," said Rodney Nightcliff to the beautiful vision at his side, in whose eyes pearly tears glistened, and whose little hand trembled as he took it once.

She looked up into his face.

"Yes," she whispered, "for a while."

"For a while!" he echoed, starting at the words, which would not have frightened a wren. "What do you mean, Ethel?"

"I am going to make you my *confidante*, Rodney," she replied, not noticing the changed expression visible upon his countenance. "I am sure you will not betray the trust I impose in you."

"Trust me, cousin," he said, reassuringly, "and discover how faithful I am."

Silence reigned between the cousins for a moment, when Ethel put her cherry lips near Rodney's ear, and whispered, while blushes suffused her roseate cheeks, making her look the lovelier:

"Rodney, I am soon to be a bride."

The announcement, not entirely unexpected, sent a thrill to Nightcliff's heart, and the exhibition of emotion that followed was perceived by the young girl.

"Why, cousin, you start?" she exclaimed. "Well might I start," he answered, feigning a sad expression, "for you have blasted my dearest hopes, Ethel."

"What, cousin! Do you mean that—"

"I mean that I love you, cousin, as man never loved maid before. I came hither to day to crave the honor of becoming your protector through life; but now, before I speak, I hear from lips to obey whose sternest command would be a pleasure, that you have pledged that hand to another."

"I am sorry, cousin Rodney."

"Tis my own fault, Ethel. I should have spoken before. But, let it pass. I tear that thought of blasted hopes from my heart as I would pluck poison-grapes from your lips. I would speak of something else. Ethel, are you aware of the fact that your father said something to Mr. Stenpost about a codicil, before his demise?"

"I am not," she answered, apparently much surprised. "I am sure that dear father, a few days before his death, told me that he was satisfied with the will he had made, and would not erase or add thereto a single word. That speaks badly for the existence of a codicil."

"I admit that it does, Ethel," said Rodney Nightcliff; "but it is certain that he told Mr. Stenpost that he had written a codicil, and the legal gentleman believes that it still exists. The nature of the document no one living knows; but I believe, with the lawyer, that it is of minor importance, yet it should be found."

"Thanks, cousin," responded Rodney. "Stenpost has informed me that he will visit you within a week for the purpose of examining your father's papers. As administrator, he possesses that right, Ethel, and I hope you will treat him kindly."

"I shall, cousin, notwithstanding the dislike I entertain for him," answered the girl. "I have tried to think well of that man; but could not. I remonstrated with father against appointing him my executor, and he would not hear."

"Your dislike will vanish when you become well acquainted with him," said Rodney. "He is a perfect gentleman. But, Ethel, I must return."

A few moments later, Nightcliff returned to his bachelor apartments.

"I have opened the way for Stenpost's work," he said, throwing himself into a chair, "and it must be well done, too, for she is terribly suspicious. If the lawyer were here now I would broach my proposition. I have not mistaken my man; I feel certain of him."

At this juncture a slight rapping reached the ears of the soliloquizer, and he went to the door with a smile, muttering:

"Tis Stenpost."

The Stenpost, a man of Coke, armed with an umbrella, and rather seedily dressed for the executor of a wealthy man's "last will and testament," threw himself into a chair, while Nightcliff seated himself at his side.

They came to business directly.

"Stenpost," said Rodney, surveying the lawyer from collar to sleeve-latchet, "you ought to have a new suit."

Stenpost was of a like opinion; but remarked that the present condition of his exchequer did not warrant so useful an expenditure.

"But when I shall have settled your uncle's estate satisfactorily, I may reclothe my person," he said, in conclusion.

"But, Stenpost, would you not like to make five thousand on such a matter, and still be called honest?"

For a wonder, Stenpost did not start. He merely opened his sleepy eyes, and looked at Nightcliff.

"I have broken ground for a great work which will enrich both of us," continued Nightcliff. "I have told Ethel that a codicil exists, and she more than half believes it—so much so, indeed, that she has promised to assist in finding it. Now do you know what I want with you, Stenpost?"

"Not exactly," said the lawyer, whose comprehension was not the brightest.

Nightcliff moved his easy-chair nearer the lawyer, and, placing his hairy lips near his ear, whispered:

"I want you to write a codicil, in my deceased uncle's chirography."

"Well," was all that followed the commission of the secret.

That codicil, changing the will, by giving to me the major part of the estate, leaving Ethel a few pennies, must be secreted in one of the mysterious apartments of uncle's cabinet, and be discovered by us in the presence of Ethel Nightcliff."

"I understand."

"Fully?"

"Fully."

Robert Stenpost was never heard from.

shall be upon my tongue. The estate shall not suffer for an executor, nor I for a guardian. I assure you, Mr. Stenpost. And, Rodney Nightcliff, when you have chosen your future abode, write me, and the executor shall forward you the bequest father left one who has disgraced the name. Now depart."

Abashed, and ashamed to meet the gaze fastened upon them, the villainous twain took their departure.

Rodney never wrote for his bequest, which Ethel expended in a needy cause, and upon the night that the heiress gave her hand to the winner of her heart, her cousin fell the victim of a fever.

Robert Stenpost was never heard from.

ing only a few lines, a cry of exultation almost broke from him.

"Ah! and this is why you kept such late hours at the bank. Ha, ha! old man, this is worth more to me than all the gold I'll get to-night. I'll keep this well, aye—"

At that moment the door was re-opened.

Black Phil crushed the paper in his pocket, and with a calm, imperceptible face, met Arthur Ames.

"Here is the money, Phil. Now, I suppose you are satisfied. I want to be alone."

"And want me out? All right."

His hand was on the door-knob.

"Ah! stop, Phil; a moment, if you please. I heard about the accident at the Pemberton. How is the boy?"

"Not hurt much," was the reply, as the man paused and glanced covertly at the banker.

"And—Bessie; how is she?" and his voice faltered.

Black Phil's eyes glittered with jealous fires as he answered:

"Bessie Raynor is well—well enough."

"Will you take her a message from me, and say—"

"No, I won't," snapped the man rudely, as he turned and faced old Ames defiantly.

"And why, if I may ask?" demanded Ames.

"I'll tell you, Arthur Ames, in a few words. I believe you are tormenting that child. And why—I love the girl myself—that's all!"

"You love Bessie Raynor? I—"

"Yes; and I have the inside track on you!"

With these words Phil hurried down the hall.

When near the street door a hand was suddenly stretched out from the gloom, and laid upon his shoulder.

Again the warning bell sounded loud and sharp, as if rung by one who would be heeded.

"Go, Minerva; my visitor is urgent. We'll resume our subject at another time. Now—"

"Father, is not this visitor that black-browed mill-man, who already has come so often?" and she turned toward him. "How can you admit such a—"

"I tell you, Minerva, go! Go at once!"

Already he felt the five thousand within his grasp.

The secret of the bogus document completed to his satisfaction, he adjusted the papers he had disarranged, and took his departure in a triumphal frame of mind.

"Won't the girl be surprised when we

At last a servant was heard hurrying along the passage to answer the bell.

The back door opened before the girl's touch.

CHAPTER XIV.

HUSH-MONEY.

BY DR. WM. MASON TURNER, AUTHOR OF "COLLEGE RIVALS," "MASKED MINER," "FIFTY THOUSAND REWARD," "THE MISSING FINGER," ETC., ETC.

THE FACTORY GIRL.

A TALE OF THE LAWRENCE LOOMS.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BELLE AND THE OPERATIVE.

BLACK PHIL turned. A voice whispered in his ear:

"Be still, man. 'Tis I—a woman—Minerva Ames. Speak not. Take off your boots, and follow me."

Wondering what all this meant, he obeyed. Taking off his heavy boots, he strode on softly behind the girl, who led the way swiftly up the passage. Not a word was spoken.

The back door opened before the girl's touch.

CHAPTER XVI.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

A SUBDUED light burned in the little second-story back room of the humble Raynor house. Within that room, on a low, common bed, though one with sheets and counterpane faultlessly white, lay Ross Raynor, the cripple.

The boy's pale face shone like a graveyard marble in the dim light; the large, expressive eyes lighting up the rest of the countenance, so ghastly, as they sparkled brightly around. On the forehead was a dark, ugly patch—the doctor's work—shutting out the confusion occasioned by the accident.

The boy's face, though attenuated and pallid, was a sweet one—one over which it seemed an angel's wing had swept—one over which pleasant breezes from a far-off, heavenly clime seemed already to have crept, leaving quiet, serenity, and resignation there.

The physician had been attentive to his patient, and had only left him an hour before, after looking to the appliances in which he had set the broken limb.

The boy's eyes wandered around him; they rested upon Bessie. She was asleep, though the hour was early. She was worn out and exhausted.

The dead body of the old father was still in the house. The funeral was to take place on the morrow.

Bessie had silently wept herself to sleep this evening. She had been thinking a great deal of her father, whose loved form was soon to be laid away in the grave. Since she could remember, she had not been separated from him. Her mother had died when she was a little girl; in fact, when poor Ross, the cripple, was an infant.

Now she was all alone with that wounded brother. By a mysterious Providence, her father was dead; and Ralph, her noble sailor-brother, was far away on a foreign sea.

She felt desolate, and tears had flown; then she had passed into a deep, dreamless sleep. Her head was in the shade, her brother's in the light.

It was a picture, in that room. We'll not paint it; let the reader imagine it.

Ross Raynor was a cripple from youth. He was now sixteen years old. An affliction of the spine had distorted his thin, frail figure, dwarfed his stature, and made him a weak, delicate creature—the very sport of the winds. But he had been brought up to work, and to work hard, in a hot mill, with the clatter, and roar, and jar of machinery constantly around him.

We do not deny that we find this state-

ment difficult to reconcile with old Silas Raynor's last words to his daughter: that he was able to take his children from the mill. Perhaps he had reasons, other than those he gave, for which he intended to give, but, upon which death had now put an eternal seal of silence.

The boy's eyes rested upon his sister; tears came to them, as in a low, hushed voice, he murmured:

"Poor, poor Bessie! She has been very good to me; now she is worn out. Oh, heavens! and we are all alone, and so poor! God pity us!"

The girl moved in the chair. She raised her head.

"Were you speaking, Ross?" she asked.

"Do you wish any thing?" and rising, weakly, to her feet, she drew near the bed,

and looked down tenderly in his face.

"I was saying something, Bessie; I was talking to myself. But, I did not wish to disturb you, my dear sister."

"You did not disturb me, Ross, and I am sorry I so far forgot myself as to go to sleep."

pull that out of the drawer right before her eyes?" he murmured, as he left the house.

"I tell you that Rodney Nightcliff is a shrewd one, and is playing a good hand for a matter of fifty thousand, I should say. And I'm to have five thousand. Why, I'll get a new chair for my office, and a piece of zinc for beneath the stove. And a new suit? No, by St. Jude! no. That'd be too everlasting expensive. Couldn't stand that?"

"I am not," she answered, apparently much surprised. "I am sure that dear father, a few days before his death, told me that he was satisfied with the will he had made, and would not erase or add thereto a single word. That speaks badly for the existence of a codicil."

"I admit that it does, Ethel," said Rodney. "But it is certain that he told Mr. Stenpost that he had written a codicil, and the legal gentleman believes that it still exists. The nature of the document no one living knows; but I believe, with the lawyer, that it is of minor importance, yet it should be found."

"If a codicil exists, Rodney, I will assist you in finding it."

"Thanks, cousin," responded Rodney. "Stenpost has informed me that he will visit you within a week for the purpose of examining your father's papers. As administrator, he possesses that right, Ethel, and I hope you will treat him kindly."

"I shall, cousin, notwithstanding the dislike I entertain for him," answered the girl. "I have tried to think well of that man; but could not. I remonstrated

She sighed and bowed her head, as a tear rolled down her face.

"Why, Bessie, what's the matter? Oh, sister! do not cry, for I wanted to talk with you to-night—seriously, too. I have just been praying, and my mind was made up; I was strong in talk."

"Oh, Ross! what mean you?" and Bessie suddenly raised her head and gazed at him.

But, upon the cripple's face there was a sweet smile and a heavenly rest.

"Don't be startled, Bessie," he said; "I do not mind it now. I did at first; but the terror has passed away."

He still smiled softly, touchingly, as his bright eyes shone into her face.

Bessie slid her hand down beneath the sheet, until it reached his unwounded palm. She pressed his hand tenderly in hers, and looking him earnestly in the face, said:

"What mean you, Ross? You speak strangely, and there is a wild look about your face. Tell me, my brother, if any dark thought distresses you; tell me if—"

"I will," Bessie interrupted the boy, as a half-stern look of resolve came to his face.

He paused for a moment; then he said, suddenly:

"Bessie, have you thought, since father's death, night before last, that—Well, have you thought how poor we are—how desolate—how forsaken? Have you pondered for a moment on the fact, that now, indeed, we are dependent upon our own exertions, and upon—what is a slender support—the cold charity of the world?"

Bessie Raynor did not answer at once. She bent her head again, as her eyes filled with tears. But she quickly looked up, as a glad smile played over her lips.

She had been thinking.

"No, no, Ross," she said, in a low, joyous tone, speaking rapidly. "Let these forebodings pass from you. I have a secret, told me by poor father on his death-bed. You should have known it before, had not that dreadful accident happened. We are no longer poor, Ross, and can leave the mill any time."

The boy started violently, and, as a twinge of pain shot through his wounded arm, he groaned.

"Restrain yourself, my dear brother; keep quiet and I will tell you what papa told me—will tell you all. Now, will you keep quiet and listen calmly?"

Wonderingly, the cripple gazed at his sister; then, he slowly nodded his head in token of assent.

Drawing still closer to him, Bessie grasped afresh his thin, hot hand, and began at once.

CHAPTER XVII.

A RAP AT THE DOOR.

BESSIE RAYNOR spoke rapidly; but, scarcely had she uttered a dozen words, when a wild, doubting expression came to her brother's face, and a half cry of wonder broke from his lips.

But, he restrained himself, and listened.

At last, Bessie concluded, and, with an angelic smile on her face, and a triumphant glance in her eye, she watched Ross.

"Deeds to this house—to lands in the West—directions for finding Spanish gold! Good heavens! Bessie, can this be true? Am I awake or dreaming still?"

"This is true, Ross. Father told me what I now have told you, and—"

"Oh, heavens! then, Bessie, why should I have gone to the factory, when we were rich—gone to be thus maimed! Ah! I—"

"I understand you, my dear brother," hastily interrupted the girl, as a thrill of agony shot through her frame. "I was so

troubled and grieved, that I forgot every thing, Ross, except that our father was dead, and that we needed money. There is but little in the house, and, you know, I could not go to the mill. Then, Black Phil, he—"

"Yes, true enough, Bessie. But then, you know, Lorin Gray is our friend yet.

"He is rich enough to buy good clothes, in which to go to see Minerva Ames, the banker's daughter."

Bessie winced, a convulsive shiver passed over her frame, and she half let fall the hot hand of the sufferer.

Ross took no heed of her perturbation. Perhaps he had not noticed it. At all events he went on to say:

"It's strange, Bessie, that Lorin should care so much for us. Everybody sees that, workman in the mill as he is, he loves Miss Minerva Ames; and people say, too, that the banker's daughter doesn't hate him."

He paused, and his large, bright eyes sought his sister's face.

Ross Raynor was too young, it may be, to read heart-secrets; he did not scan his sister's face to read hers.

Lorin Gray, though he is a poor man working in the mill, is a noble, honest man, Ross," said Bessie, in a slow, labored tone, as looking up, she saw that her brother expected an answer.

Then, in a trembling voice, she continued, as she again cast her eyes down:

"I don't blame him for—liking Minerva Ames. She is beautiful, very learned and worth. But she is more learned than Lorin Gray. Mother Mull, I've heard say, sent him for ten years to the best schools in New York city."

"Yes, I've heard the same. But it is strange, Bessie, that Miss Ames could turn away from the many beaux, fine, rich gentlemen, too, who go to see her, and that she should prefer Lorin Gray to them all. I don't believe she does; I can't believe it."

"Lorin Gray is a very handsome man, Ross. He is young and strong. Then, you know, he risked his life to save Miss Ames the day her horses ran away on the Salem turnpike."

"Yes, yes; I had forgotten! That was a bold deed, and it takes Lorin Gray to do just such a thing. He saved my life, too, you know, by doing what six men can't generally do: flinging the belt from the big turbine. But, alas! yes—I have a sister, too," he suddenly exclaimed, "and she is a prettier and better girl than Minerva Ames, rich as the banker's daughter is!"

"There! there! 'Sh! Ross; you speak idly!" and, as a crimson blush mantled her cheek, she bowed her head.

"Then why does Lorin Gray come here?" asked Ross, his mind suddenly turned in another direction.

"Why, he is a common workingman himself; we are poor people, too, and he has a good heart. That's why he comes here."

Bessie stammered, as she uttered these words.

Ross did not reply; a reflective shade passed over his pale face; then a frown wrinkled his scarred brow.

Was it pain, or was a black fancy passing through his brain?

Bessie watched him.

"Does your arm hurt you, brother?" she asked.

"Not more than usual, Bessie. I was thinking, sister, that I had forgotten to tell you something," and he kept his eyes on her face.

"Well, Ross."

"I have had a vision, sister, a strange distorted vision which assumed shape."

"Oh, Ross! speak not!"

"Do not interrupt me, Bessie. I'll tell you briefly about this vision. It came to me last night, and all day long have I been thinking of it—have been praying over it! The spring, with its green grass and beautiful flowers, Bessie, will not come to me again! Before the snows have melted from the hills, and the ice has left the banks and drifted down the Merrimac, I'll be gone from you! Then you and Ralph alone, will be left of our family. Oh, Bessie, I have had a vision of death—my death!"

As he spoke he buried his head still further in the pillow, and closed his eyes.

She shook him gently. He opened his eyes and smiled sweetly at her.

"Another time, Bessie, and I'll tell you all," he said; "not now."

Again he closed his eyes and in a few moments his gentle breathing, his placid, immobile countenance, his perfect quiet, showed that the poor cripple slept.

Bessie trimmed the lamp, and, sitting by his side, watched him, with tear-filled eyes.

The hours grew on, the night darkened and deepened, and the sad winds moaning along the water, sighed around the eaves and corners of the humble house of poverty. These night-winds seemed to sing a doleful requiem over the dreary house and the desolation abiding within.

Again Bessie's eyes grew heavy. But suddenly she started and sat upright.

A low, guarded rap on the street-door had aroused her.

The rap was repeated.

Bessie arose, as a look of fear crept into her face. She paused, however, ere she turned from the chair. But then, like lightning, a glad expression sprung into her eyes.

"Lorin!" she exclaimed. "He promised to come; he is here. May Heaven bless him!"

Without waiting longer, she hurried down-stairs, and creeping softly through the death-inhabited room, lit by its single unpretending taper, she reached the front door.

She paused here a moment; but, summoning her resolution, she suddenly flung the door wide but softly open.

The light gleamed out, and with a little cry of alarm, Bessie started back at what she saw.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 73.)

Overland Kit:

OR,

THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "WOLF DEMON," "WHITE WITCH," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHY JINNIE LOVED DICK.

BERNICE looked at Jinnie in wonder, but, in a second, a thought that explained the mystery came into her mind.

"I understand," she said; "it was you who carried the news of Mr. Talbot's danger to the road-agent."

"I didn't say so," Jinnie replied.

"True; but I am sure that I am right."

"Do you love Dick?" asked Jinnie, suddenly, fixing her keen eyes on the face of Bernice as she spoke.

Bernice was troubled at the abrupt question; a hot flush swept over her face for an instant.

"Do you think that I love him?" she asked, evading the question.

"I know you do!" replied Jinnie, promptly.

"You know?—you mean that you guess that I do," Jinnie said, quietly.

"No; I don't mean any such thing!" the girl exclaimed. "I know it. I can see it in your face. I saw it that night when you looked out of the window. You see I speak right. I am not ashamed to say that I love him; I say it before all the world and it ain't fair for you to come here and take him away from me. I'd do any thing in the world for him—die for him; would you?"

"Yes, Ross. But Lorin Gray is a poor man himself, and—"

"He is rich enough to buy good clothes, in which to go to see Minerva Ames, the banker's daughter."

Bessie winced, a convulsive shiver passed over her frame, and she half let fall the hot hand of the sufferer.

Ross took no heed of her perturbation. Perhaps he had not noticed it. At all events he went on to say:

"It's strange, Bessie, that Lorin should care so much for us. Everybody sees that, workman in the mill as he is, he loves Miss Minerva Ames; and people say, too, that the banker's daughter doesn't hate him."

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Then, in a trembling voice, she continued, as she again cast her eyes down:

"I don't blame him for—liking Minerva Ames. She is beautiful, very learned and worth. But she is more learned than Lorin Gray. Mother Mull, I've heard say, sent him for ten years to the best schools in New York city."

"Yes, I've heard the same. But it is strange, Bessie, that Miss Ames could turn away from the many beaux, fine, rich gentlemen, too," he suddenly exclaimed, "and she is a prettier and better girl than Minerva Ames, rich as the banker's daughter is!"

"There! there! 'Sh! Ross; you speak idly!" and, as a crimson blush mantled her cheek, she bowed her head.

"Then why does Lorin Gray come here?" asked Ross, his mind suddenly turned in another direction.

"Why, he is a common workingman himself; we are poor people, too, and he has a good heart. That's why he comes here."

Bessie stammered, as she uttered these words.

"How do you know that I have tried?"

"Hain't I got eyes?" asked Jinnie, quickly.

"Can't I see?" If you wasn't here, Dick would love me. He told me once that his life belonged to me and that I could have it whenever I wanted it.

"Do you think that he will break that promise?"

"How do you know that I have tried?"

"Hain't I got eyes?" asked Jinnie, quickly.

"Can't I see?" If you wasn't here, Dick would love me. He told me once that his life belonged to me and that I could have it whenever I wanted it.

"Do you think that he will break that promise?"

"How do you know that I have tried?"

"Hain't I got eyes?" asked Jinnie, quickly.

"Can't I see?" If you wasn't here, Dick would love me. He told me once that his life belonged to me and that I could have it whenever I wanted it.

"Do you think that he will break that promise?"

"How do you know that I have tried?"

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"Yes," Jinnie said, softly. "I told you then, that the life that you had saved belonged to you, that it was yours whenever you wanted to claim it. You haven't asked for it yet, Jinnie."

A single glance Jinnie cast into Dick's face, and then again the long, golden lashes veiled the large, clear eyes.

"You're right, Jinnie," he said, slowly. "I had forgot. I must treat you like a woman and not like a child. It is not right that you, a woman, should speak, when I, a man, hesitate. But, Jinnie, I have not spoken before because—well, because I don't know myself; I can't tell what I am or what I think. I'm a good deal like a piece of pine floating down the Reese, at the mercy of every current and eddy in the stream. One moment, I think that I am a strong, determined, self-willed fellow; and the next, I come to the conclusion, that a more wavering, irresolute wretch than I don't exist on top of the earth. Jinnie, I belong to you by rights; I know that, and when I am with you I feel that I love you better than I do any other woman in the world, but, when I am away from you—"

And Talbot paused, irresolute.

"You think that you don't love me?" Jinnie asked, looking up into Dick's face again with her earnest eyes.

"No, I don't think that; but, the thought comes to me that, perhaps, I don't love you well enough to make you happy," Dick replied, honestly.

"You only think so when you are away from me?"

"There's a very easy cure for that, then."

"What is it?" Talbot asked, in astonishment.

"You mustn't go away from me at all," the girl replied, simply.

A smile came over Dick's face at the answer.

"And so, Jinnie, if I tell you honestly and frankly, that I think I love you, but am not quite sure of it, and ask you to be my wife, what now will be your answer?"

"Dick, when you play cards do you always make the man you're playing against tell you how he is going to play, before you commence the game?" the girl asked, shrewdly.

"Of course not," Talbot replied, quickly.

"And yet, you wish me to tell you how I am going to answer before you put the question. I don't think that is quite fair, Dick."

"Little girl, I'm no match for you!" cried Talbot, suddenly; "there's more brains in this little head" than in a dozen like mine. I haven't asked you a fair question, but now I will."

With a touch full of tenderness, he drew the light form of Jinnie still closer to him, raised up the little head with its halo of red-gold hair, until the clear gray eyes looked full into his own.

The smile upon Jinnie's face, and the joyous light dancing in her eyes, told how happy she was.

"Jinnie, you know me as Dick Talbot," he said, slowly; "it is very likely that it is not my name. In other years, and in other places far away from this wild region, I may have been known by another name. Blood may be upon my hands, human blood; why, Jinnie, I may be stained by all sorts of crimes. I tell you this, so that you may not act rashly, but take plenty of time to think it over. And now, for what I was going to say at the beginning: Jinnie, I think that I love you well enough to ask you to be my wife. I ain't quite sure of it, for, as I told you before, I'm like a man wandering in a dark night; I can't see my way clear, I'm willing to risk it, though, if you are; so, Jinnie, will you be my wife? Don't be in a hurry to answer, you know; take all the time you like."

"One little second—only a breath is all I want," Jinnie cried, quickly. "Yes." Firm and decided, but full of love was that "yes."

A moment, Dick looked into the clear eyes, now lustrous with the light of love; he saw the flushed cheeks and quivering scarlet lips, so rich and ripe in their dewy sweetness, and then, over his soul, like a flood sweeping all before it down the canyon's bed, came a sweet sense of joy, which told him that he did really love the girl, whose little form he pressed against his heart. Then he bent over and kissed the little, full lips that so eagerly awaited that kiss.

A moment of joy it was to the hearts of the man and woman who were so fondly clasped in each other's arms; a moment, worth a life-time of toil to gain; full recompence for years of doubtful suspense.

The soft sound of the passionate kiss that told that two human hearts had agreed to beat in loving concert till the Dark Angel sounded the call of doom, resounded gently through the darkness of the passage-way. It reached the ears of the watcher beneath the stairway.

The sound that told of loving concord, transformed him into a demon of hate. His hand closed, convulsively, over his revolver, death was in his heart.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 68.)

riage is in waiting. Let your maid accompany us."

Winnie's face lighted.

"So gladly, so thankfully I'll go, Harry! What shall I say to Lillian?"

A sudden black frown, so intense that she almost started, gathered on Harry's face.

"You need make no explanations to Miss Rothermel. She and this gentleman can arrange their affairs."

His voice was hard, merciless, and Winnie intuitively knew there was good reason for his strange conduct.

Mr. Alvany arose, rather nervously, after Winnie had gone to prepare herself for the ride to the city.

"I will not remain under this roof a moment longer; were it my own, I should eject you; as it is, I am rather a victim of circumstances, but I can bide my time."

He walked toward the door just as Winnie came in, followed by Lillian Rothermel, who looked anxiously, even fearfully around.

"No!" yelled Harry, catching Mr. Alvany's arm and jerking him back violently. "You do not leave Fernleigh just yet. Officer, here's your man!"

A detective, accompanied by two policemen, sprung through the French window, and in a second had secured him, Winnie and Lillian looking on with wild-eyed amazement.

"Harry! Harry! what does it mean?"

It was Lillian Rothermel's sweet, terrified voice that asked the question as she clung to his arm.

"Don't desile me, woman, with your polluted hands!" and he flung them off. "It means that you are found out—you have been tracked to your lair, you tigress you! Ah! Winnie, see her guilt, her deceitful treachery, her duplicity, on her face!"

For a moment Lillian had straightened herself proudly, indignantly; then she grew stony-eyed and rigid; and at last, when Harry had pointed his finger at her, she had sunk, groveling, a heap on the floor.

Winnie sprung to her assistance, but Harry held her firmly back.

"No, dearest; she is not fit for you to touch; her heart is vile beyond conception, and her hands are red with blood—the blood of Edward Clavering!"

A fearful shriek burst from Lillian's lips, and she struggled to her feet.

"It's a lie, a foul, false—"

Then a bright tinge of blood stained her lips, that made her hideous in her ghastly palleness; faster the life-current oozed out between her fast-set teeth, but she still essayed to speak in an awful, gurgling voice.

"It is a diabolical lie, Harry—Gordeloup! You know—I—loved you—hated you!"

And then the thick stream issuing from the blood-vessel broken in the fury of passion and strength of fear, spouted out a fiery torrent—and with it the life of Lillian Rothermel.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE REVELATION.

SOLEMN, even unto the silent horror of the grave, the men looked down on the dead face that lay upturned on the emerald carpet; and Winnie, moaning and almost fainting, lay in her husband's arms.

Harry's low, impressing voice broke the awful stillness.

"Mr. Leslie Alvany, on condition of confessing your complicity with that woman—and he looked at Lillian's dead face again—and acknowledging that you are not Lester Alvany, my wife's first husband, but a twin-brother, named Leslie, whom Miss Rothermel accidentally met in Switzerland and hired to play the part of your dead brother, giving you all necessary instructions therefor—you will be allowed to return to Europe with no further punishment than your own guilty soul will carry."

Mr. Alvany had undergone a complete change during these few tragic moments.

"It is true—all true—all true, I swear," he hurriedly said, with chattering teeth, as he glanced askance at Lillian's body.

"And you'll never return to America again, under penalty of the utmost rigor of the law. Now, sir, go!"

He was not slow to take advantage of Harry's mercy; and then Winnie and her husband summoned the household and explained, leaving the remains of the guilty woman in charge of the police, in the very house where she had, but so shortly before, wrought a horrible deed, little recking how it would rebound on her own proud head.

Skillfully had she hidden the traces of her crime; and but for one misstep she made, one that seemed unworthy of her, consummate plotter that she was, her guilt would have died with her.

But Harry's had been the hand to unravel the mystery—his, guided by a God who had declared "Vengeance belonged to him alone for repayment" that God who has since crowned Harry Gordeloup's life with brightest coronals of earthly rejoicing.

If had occurred this way, anguish-stricken, Harry had gone to the library that night when Mr. Alvany had made his sudden and blighting appearance.

For hours he had walked the floor in tumult of spirit, devising all manner of plans to relieve Winnie of the fate he believed before her, when he suddenly remembered a pamphlet of laws on such subjects that Mr. Clavering had possessed.

He began a search for it, impatient for the morning that would take him to his lawyer.

He could not find it; he stumbled over drawers, and found himself in unknown recesses and compartments, where, as if an angel finger was guiding him, he struck against a carved acorn in the side of a perusin's cap, and flew open, revealing—

Good Heavens! amid all his tortures, all the crushing weight of his own agony, he felt the blood curdle round his heart.

There lay a tiny silver weapon, and on the bar that was used instead of a ball, a speck of blood, dried and dull, while a little above was a dull green blur.

What could it be but the poisoned instrument that had caused Mr. Clavering's death?

Beside it was a scarlet-bound book, locked with a golden clasp, that all his strength could not undo; that a blow from the iron pin-rack burst apart.

It did not need many moments reading to convince him of the horrible truth that Lillian Rothermel had heard Mr. Clavering's remark to himself regarding the terms of the will in her favor, and that she deliberately took his life, that she might win Harry back to her.

"No word!" said Harry, as he held his arm tightly about Winnie's trembling form. "I forbid further intrusion upon Mrs. Gordeloup's presence until I resign her to you—which, I think, will be some time, if ever, judging by the advice of my lawyer."

A startled look came to Mr. Alvany's eyes, but he forced it away.

"You can't frighten me with your bugaboos!"

"I've no desire to, as I conclude your alarm will come soon enough. Winnie, my darling, will you get your hat and sacque, and return with me to New York? I have prepared rooms for us—"

"By Jove, you dare not! I'll have a policeman at your heels, you villain, if you attempt such a wholesale outrage!"

Harry smiled carelessly.

"Be as quick as you can, dear. The car-

to aid her in working ruin and wrong where she had resolved to do it.

She remarked how blind were Miss Amy and Winnie, who attributed her exuberant spirits to the mountain air, and when at home to her love-letters from Switzerland, and the while it was the delicious results of this sleepless vengeance of hers.

Armed with these infallible proofs, Harry saw he could, at one blow, sweep all clouds from his own and Winnie's path forever.

The result we have seen.

Lillian Rothermel, whose revenge had led her into a most daring attempt, had but given into Harry's hand the weapons to destroy herself, whereas she intended to be utterly despoiled of all he cherished.

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MIND YOUR PUNCTUATION.

BY H. A. FRANCIS.

A countryman to London came,
And, staring up at sign and name,
Spied on a sign in letters bold—
In letters made of solid gold—
The following:—“What! sir, do you think
I'll treat you for nothing and give you some
drink?”

“God bless him—he's a generous man;
He's doing all the good he can;
I'll just step in, and look and try
This good man's hospitality.”
Thus musing to himself, he went
into the good man's restaurant;
He looked in, then he thought he'd try
His appetite to satiety.

“God bless him—he's a generous man;
And things in France he received at;
Dinner places, good wine at Santa Cruz,
One filled de bouquet, and all such stuff;
Until—with several buttons loose—
He felt that he had had enough.

Then to the counter—just to thank
The courteous, liberal-hearted host—
He went. There to his health he drank,
And then proposed the following toast:
“Here's to the health of the man—just think—
Who'll treat you for nothing and give you some
drink?”

“What's that? what's that!” the landlord cried;
“What's that? what's that?” he read my sign:
“I did, sir.” Rascals replied;
“I read it—every word and line;
It plainly says:—“What, sir, do you think,
I'll treat you for nothing and give you some
drink?”

“Ba ha!” the landlord laughed; “you fool,
Where did you get your education?
Pray! did you never go to school?
My sign says:—“What! sir, do you think
I'll treat you for nothing and give you some
drink?”

Josa.

BY AGILE PENNE.

MEXICO had fallen, and the fight was done. The luckless Emperor, a helpless prisoner in the hands of the merciless Mexican; and I, Colonel Dick Sara, concealed in the house of a friendly Spaniard, awaiting a chance to escape from the city, and from the power of the blood-thirsty soldiers of the Republic.

A Southerner by birth, I had fought for the “stars and bars” until Lee's sun had set on the gory Virginia field; then I had sought service in Mexico under the Austrian Arch-Duke. And hard service it was, too; not a great deal of fighting, but a terrible amount of hard work, marching and counter-marching, very scanty rations, and no pay, to speak of.

In one of the last affairs of the campaign, I had received a severe wound, a lance-thrust through the left shoulder, which relieved me from active duty for a while.

Thus it was that I was not taken prisoner by the victorious army of the half-breed president of the Mexican Republic.

As soon as my wound healed, I determined to attempt to escape from the city, and find refuge beneath the starry flag of my native land once more.

My kind friend procured a disguise, and so, one dark night, attired like an honest farmer, and mounted on a sturdy mustang, I bade farewell to the Mexican capital. Being well armed—a couple of revolvers and a breech-loading Colt rifle—I had little fear of the gentlemen of the highway who render traveling so unsafe in Mexico.

For three days had I pushed on straight for the American frontier. On the afternoon of the third, climbing a steep hill, the road densely fringed with the cactus and the pinon, the heat of the sun and the dust of the way combined to give me an intense thirst. But, on reaching the top of the hill, I discovered a little rude hut perched by the side of the road.

I drew rein and halted by the door. In answer to my summons, a Mexican girl came from the adobe hut. She was a pretty, brown-cheeked lass, with eyes as bright and as large as a deer. A troubled look appeared upon her face at the sight when she beheld me; a look, the cause of which I could not understand.

“Can I have a glass of water, or of mescal?” I asked, although I had but little hope of getting a draught of the ardent Mexican liquor in that lonely spot.

“No, señor,” replied the girl, but, before she could continue her speech, a brawny Mexican stepped from behind the shelter of the pinon trees. He was an ugly fellow, with heavy black beard and lowering, evil-looking eyes.

“Why do you say no, Josa?” he demanded, scowling at the girl. “There is a flask of mescal hanging against the wall. You are welcome to it, señor, although it is poor stuff,” then he smiled, showed his white teeth, and removed his broad-leaved hat, politely. “Will the señor dismount and enter my poor house?”

Truth to say, I was not sorry to accept the invitation, for I had been in the saddle since daybreak.

I dismounted and entered the house. The Mexican produced the flask of mescal and a leather drinking-cup. A single swallow of the fiery liquor convinced me that the Mexican had spoken the truth when he had said that it was but poor stuff. Worse liquor my lips had never tasted.

My host noticed the grimace upon my face as I tasted the wretched decoction.

“It is bad, señor!” he exclaimed, in a tone of conviction. I did not attempt to deny the truth.

“I will fetch you some water from the spring,” and seizing an iron pan, he bade the girl follow him, and left the hut. I noticed that the girl seemed to obey the bidding with reluctance, and cast a peculiar glance at me as she disappeared in the doorway. I wondered something at this, but gave it but little heed.

The two were absent some ten minutes, then they returned with the water. The face of the girl seemed paler than before, and there was a strange light shining in her eyes.

Mixing the liquor and the water together, I succeeded in allaying my thirst a little. I offered the Mexican a silver piece for his trouble, which he, with great dignity, refused.

“No, señor!” he exclaimed, drawing himself up, loftily. “Hospitality is a virtue.”

I did not press the coin upon him, but contented myself with thanking him for the service, then once more leaped into the saddle and set off.

A half a dozen strides and I was faint to pull up, my horse dead lame. I dismounted and examined the hoofs of the animal, thinking that, perhaps, a thorn of the cactus had got into the flesh of the hoofs; but not a sign of such a thing did I see. The Mexican proffered his services, but his

search was as fruitless as my own. Night was coming on rapidly; already the sun had sunk behind the western hills, and evening's dusky mantle began to vail in the earth.

“Caramba!” exclaimed the Mexican, suddenly; “let the señor stay with me to-night; to-morrow, the beast may be well. My house is poor, but it is at the service of the señor.”

Seeing no other course open, I accepted the freely-given invitation in the same spirit with which it was bestowed. So, I returned to the house. My beast was stabled in a rude shed at the back of the hut, and I prepared to make myself comfortable for the night.

In a short time, a middle-age dame, with a hard, repulsive face entered the hut. The Mexican introduced her as his wife. Supper was prepared, and I partook of the frugal meal.

The Mexican, who informed me that he was called Pedro Santilla, took a wonderful fancy to my rifle. It was the first breech-loader that he had seen, and he could not sufficiently express his admiration of it.

And all the time he was speaking, the eyes of the girl, Josa, were fixed upon me in a strange, peculiar way. The glittering eyes of the girl seemed to convey a warning. But, against what? was the question I put to myself. I looked at the Mexican and his wife. Their faces were ugly, forbidding; but, was there danger to be apprehended from them? At any rate, I determined to be upon my guard.

Supper over, the Mexican, with the courtly politeness so common to his race, tendered me a handful of cigarettes. Then we sat and smoked, while the girl and the old woman crouched like two witches by the side of the fire-place.

The host observed that it was with difficulty that I kept my eyes open, and bade the old woman prepare a bed for me. A rude mattress, a tattered blanket, and a quantity of straw, were spread upon the floor. The Mexican explained that he, his wife, and the girl, whom he spoke of as his niece, would find accommodations in the adjoining apartment.

Bearing the flickering candle, the host retired, followed by the two women, the girl last. And, as I caught a glimpse of her face, as she turned in the doorway, I fancied that on her lips was the word, “Be-ware!”

With a feeling of depression weighing upon my spirits, I lay down upon the rude bed and drew the ragged blanket over me.

“It ar' perfectly wonderful,” said my old friend, Ike Bundy, as we sat talking one night long after the rest of the fellows were asleep. “It ar' perfectly wonderful what fools some men will be when they're in Juncy kentry an' know that evry bresh er rock mout hide an enemy.”

“What do you allude to?” I asked, knowing there was something interesting to come.

“There is a happy land far, far away.”

“It is that kind of music that once stirred the everlasting soul of my boyhood till it melted away into the muffled cadences of the Devil's dream, or the girl I left behind me.

I sought my lonely room and blew from the musical hollow of that instrument it was filled with all kinds of tunes if you gave it the right kind of a blow) the sweet air of

“There is a happy land far, far away.”

In ten minutes my wife came and said she had been hunting high and low for that unearthly wailing, and that she would get a divorce if it wasn't stopped; then in came a delegation of citizens from the remotest part of the city, with no music in their souls, informing me that they would be obliged to seek that happy land far, far away unless that squeal-

ing was discontinued.

“I have come to the conclusion that this is a great country when a man is not allowed to indulge his musical talents in peace.”

“We have a new string band. It brings tears to your eyes to hear them even time their instruments. They can time all night.

The head violinist learned all he knows on a saw and buck.

The second violinist got the rudiments of his art on a cornstalk fiddle; and he can lose himself in the harmony of sound more than any man I ever heard play—he is continually lost.

The clarinet player got his first start on a dinner-horn out on a farm.

The bassoon player never had any musical opportunities; he will tell you so himself, although it is unnecessary.

The fellow who plays the cymbals got his musical education by performing on a gong at a very high price.

“It is a great master,” he said.

to my face. My regular breathing, and my apparently close-shut eyes, deceived her.

“The heretic sleeps,” she muttered, in a self-satisfied tone, to the Mexican.

“Good; I can dispatch him easily,” and I could hear the wretch chuckle to himself. Then he advanced into the room. From his belt he drew a long, shining knife. I recognized the weapon; 'twas the murderous blade usually carried by the Mexican bandits. He raised his arm to deal the death stroke, when, with a sudden movement, I drew the revolver from my bosom, unclosed my eyes, and leveled the weapon at his head; I had previously cocked it.

Never, in all my life, had I seen such a spectacle of fear as the face of the unmasked assassin presented. A moment he glared at me with a howl of terror, fled from the room, followed by the woman, who dropped the candle in her flight. Luckily it was not extinguished.

I picked it up and placed it upon the table. Hastily dressing myself, I sought the rude shed where my horse had been placed. I found the animal safe, and the girl standing by its side. With a smile, she drew the slender piece of steel from the hoof, where the villainous Mexican had driven it.

And why had the girl taken so much trouble to save the life of a stranger and a “heretic?” Simply because she had recognized me in the officer of the Foreign Legion who had once saved her life in Durango.

The break of day found me many leagues from the lone hut on the hill-top. I never again saw my preserver, but, while I lived, I shall never forget her, the dark-eyed Josa.

Two he rubbed out quicker nor lightnin', an' then down the canyin' he put, the hull crowd arter him, hot an' heavy.

“Another 'un tackled him, an' he knocked on the head wi' the butt uv his six-shooter, an' purty soon arter he shot another. This wur four already, but that wur a heap more left.

“At last the game feller got among the mustangs what the Injuns had left standin' down below, an' runnin' through the lot—twur good cover, you know—he reched the timmer on t'other side uv the crick, an' got off in the dark.

“He got back to the fort at last, but he was nearly ruined for life wi' the sharp rocks an' pricklys, fur, yur see, he didn't have his shoes on.

“No, I don't understand' how such a man as *that* could ever 'a'